

HEDYSARUM GYRANS.



CHARACTER GENERICUS.

Corollæ carina transverse obtusa.

Legumen articulis monospermis.

Lin. Syst. Nat. p. 493.

Diadelph : Decandr :

CHARACTER SPECIFICUS.

HEDYSARUM foliis ternatis.

Lin. Suppl. Plantar. 1781. p. 332.

Cum paucis abhinc annis ab interiori Bengala ad nos pervenerit hæc planta, perculit omnino Europæos physicos mira illius atque antehac incognita qualitas ; motus nempe perpetuus et spontaneus, causis externis nec impeditus nec acceleratus, Mimosæ aliarumque nonnullarum more negans irritari. Efficitur hic motus alternatim convenientibus et recedentibus duobus parvulis foliis utrinque ad pediculos fitis, quæ per totum fere diem leni hoc exercitio agitantur.

Apud nos tamen non semper expectationi respondet Hedyfarum Gyranis, frigus sentiens torpidum, aeremque pigrum et a nativo longe diversum, manensque meridie, languido et imbecillo conatu vim insitam ægre evocat : clarissimum argumentum mitiores zephyrorum auras, mollemque cœli Indici temperiem hypocaustrorum vaporibus male permutari. In Gangetica terra
facili-

facillimus et liberrimus est hujus plantæ motus, quam facram habent incolæ, cæterisque longe digniorem.

Spontaneo huic motui nihil adhuc in vegetabilibus simile repertum est: inter plurima est quæ oculis, non intellectu cernuntur, quæque non possumus non admirari, ignorantiam fatentes.

In Europa ad altitudinem duorum vel trium pedum plerumque crescit, foliaque gerit læte viridia, quorum media pars magis est glauca; floresque rubentes subcæruleo tinctos, et interdum flavescentes.





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ANIMATED HEDYSARUM,
OR THE
MOVING PLANT.



GENERIC CHARACTER.

Keel of the *Corolla* transversely obtuse.
Legume with single-seeded joints.

SPECIFIC CHARACTER.

HEDYSARUM with ternate leaves.

The plant of which a figure is here given was some years backwards transmitted to us from the interior parts of Bengal, and struck the European Naturalists with astonishment at a phænomenon till then unknown amongst vegetables; viz. a constant and voluntary motion; unconnected with any peculiar irritability, as in the sensitive plants and some others, and neither accelerated or retarded by external causes. The motion consists in the alternate meeting and receding of the two small appendages or leaflets situated on each side the footstalks, and which are engaged in this gentle exercise during the greatest part of the day.

In our own country, however, it is not always that the specimens of this curious plant, in an air so different from that of their native regions, exhibit themselves to advantage: they frequently feel the benumbing effects

fects of an unfavorable climate, and only make a faint and feeble attempt towards the middle of the day, at exerting their extraordinary faculty ; a convincing proof how much the artificial heat of a northern stove is inferior to the genial warmth and balmy softness of its native Indian atmosphere ! It is there that it exerts its wonderful motions with unrestrained freedom, and is regarded as a sacred plant, possessed of powers superior to the common race of vegetables.

This voluntary motion is not analogous to any other yet observed in plants : it is one of those numerous phænomena which we are obliged to view without understanding, and to admire without being able to explain.

The specimens raised in Europe generally rise to about the height of two or three feet : the leaves are of a bright green with the middle part of a more glaucous appearance than the rest : the flowers are of a pale red, slightly tinged with blueish, and sometimes yellowish.